

MEDIA RELEASE

Hold Fast

Christine Elfman

On View — by appointment only: August 19 — September 30, Hours: 2 — 6pm

Opening Reception — Thursday, August 19, 6 — 8pm

Artist Talk — Wednesday, September 8th, 6PM (free, in-person event) Limited capacity **RSVP** — info@penumbrafoundation.org

NEW YORK, NY (May 6, 2021) — Penumbra Foundation is pleased to present *Hold Fast*, a solo exhibition by artist Christine Elfman.

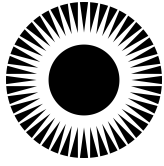
The exhibition is an experiment in photographic duration and visibility, featuring rocks and plaster cast fragments as subject matter. Impermanent photographs made by fading lichen dyed paper in the sun will be exhibited alongside silver gelatin prints through a range of presentation methods that explore the extremes of surrender and preservation. The installation invites viewers to consider their relationship to change and the unknown, to negotiate loss and security through the medium of photography.

Elfman writes, "They say that rocks never die, they just change form. What if that were true of everything, including us and pictures? The change happens slowly, so we only notice it in hindsight, like the subtle shift of our faces over time, that photographs reveal so clearly. These pictures are of my hands, my mother's hands, plaster casts of my past hands, fragments of plaster cast statues, and rock formations."

Some of the photographs will receive direct light exposure in the gallery, and noticeably fade or disappear during the course of the exhibition. Other photographs will be protected so well that they are no longer visible. At both ends of the spectrum: defenselessly fading, and fully safeguarded, the photograph becomes invisible, and can only be imagined or remembered.

The opening hours for this exhibition are Monday through Friday, 2 PM — 6 PM. Admission is free. Viewing is by [appointment](#) only.

To learn more or purchase the publication please visit: penumbrafoundation.org/collaborations



About the artist:

Christine Elfman makes photographs that explore the unity of opposites such as stillness and change, intimacy and distance, visibility and the unknown. She received her MFA from California College of the Arts, and BFA from Cornell University. Elfman's interest in ephemerality has been influenced by her family photographs and work with historic collections at the George Eastman House, University of Rochester Rare Books Library, and the Berkeley Art Museum. Her work has recently been exhibited at Zona Maco in Mexico City; Euqinom Gallery, San Francisco; Philadelphia Photo Arts Center; Handwerker Gallery, Ithaca College; University of the Arts, Philadelphia; Photofairs San Francisco; and Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco. Recent awards include a 2020 Light Work Grant in Photography, 2020 Penumbra Foundation Workspace Residency, and 2017 Philadelphia Photo Arts Center Exhibition. Her work has appeared in The San Francisco Chronicle, Photograph Magazine, Der Greif, Humble Arts Foundation, SF Weekly, and The Photo Review. Elfman has taught art most recently at Bowdoin College, Cornell University, and San Francisco Art Institute. She is represented by Euqinom Gallery in San Francisco, and lives in Ithaca, NY.

About the anthotype process:

An anthotype is an image created with photosensitive plant material or other impermanent dyes. This process was originally invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842. Paper is coated with fugitive light-sensitive dye made from flowers, plants, organisms, or synthetic dyes. Objects such as leaves, lace, and other thin materials such as a positive image transparency are placed in contact with the sensitized paper and exposed to sunlight for days. The sunlight fades the highlights, and the color remains in the shaded parts. The paper remains sensitive to light.

About Penumbra Project Space

The 300 square-foot Project Space offers emerging and mid-career artists a place to present new work. The exhibitions are developed in conjunction with Penumbra's editorial or educational programming.

About Penumbra Foundation

Penumbra Foundation is a non-profit organization that brings together the Art and Science of Photography through education, research, outreach, public and residency programs. Its goal is to be a comprehensive resource for photographers at any level, artists, students, professionals, historians, researchers, conservators and curators. Penumbra specializes in advancing the use of historic and alternative photographic technologies for contemporary image-making.

Contact: Leandro Villaro | leandro@penumbrafoundation.org
36 East 30th Street · New York, NY 10016 (Between Madison Ave. and Park Ave. South)
(917) 288-0343 | penumbrafoundation.org | [@penumbrafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/penumbrafoundation)